



**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING**

Thursday, September 13, 2018 6:00 PM
Visitor Center, 14 North Street, Claremont, NH

**MINUTES
Approved 10/23/2018**

Mr. Dickerman called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

I. Roll Call

Present: Gary Dickerman, Steve Wood, Scott Magnuson, Kim Gogan, Eileen Skowronski

Absent:

DPW Director, Scott Sweet, asked the Commission to review and sign-off on a wetlands permit application for a culvert replacement on Bible Hill Road. Mr. Sweet explained the project and showed its location and design on a plan. The project will take a couple of weeks to complete and will be done before first snow. The culvert and headwalls are designed to ensure that there will always be water in the bottom of the culvert to facilitate passage of aquatic creatures through the culvert. Mr. Sweet answered all the Commission's questions. The Commission had no objections to the project and agreed to sign the application.

Motion: To approve the plan as presented for the culvert replacement on Bible Hill Road.

Made by: Mr. Wood **Second:** Mr. Magnuson

Vote: Unanimous in favor

II. Finalize Plans for Source-to-Sea Clean-Up Activities

Mr. Dickerman has been discussing clean-up activities with Eversource. They anticipate sending 12-15 volunteers for Friday's activities. Depending on the number of people that show up, Mr. Dickerman may add the following sites for clean-up on Friday:

- Redwater Brook where it crosses Main Street near Bowker
- Sugar River behind Wade's Place
- Citizen Street bridge
- Sugar River at the Sullivan/Twistback Roads intersection
- Confluence of the Sugar and Connecticut Rivers
- Behind McDonald's

It was agreed to meet at the Visitor Center and disperse from there. Clean-up will go from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM. Nick Koloski is donating gloves and bags. Mr. Dickerman will check into whether volunteers will need a waiver from the City.

III. Other Business

a. Unnamed Easement

The Commission learned it has a 10+-acre conservation easement at the base of the closed landfill. It abuts the rail trail, but appears to have no other public access. Mr. Dickerman walked the land with Mr. Sweet. It appears undisturbed. There are several monitor wells on the plot that are checked twice a year by an outside firm. The boundaries of the easement have not been surveyed. Mr. Sweet said he would see if DPW has a perimeter survey of the landfill.

b. Ford Dealership

The Commission reviewed the following draft letter to DES composed to address the mowing in the wet meadow at the Ford dealership on Charlestown Road:

*Land Resources Management Program – Jen Drociak
Compliance Specialist
29 Hazen Drive, PO Box 95
Concord NH 03302-0095*

RE: *Land Resources Management File #2018-02330
155-157 Charlestown Road, Tax Map 165/Lot #13
Claremont NH*

Dear Jen,

On August 15, 2017, the Claremont Conservation Commission wrote a letter of support for the wetlands permit application for a proposed Ford Dealership to be located at what is now 155-157 Charlestown Road in the City of Claremont. That letter was written based on a presentation at the site given by the project's soils engineer, Randy Rhoades, and the project owner, Chris Gomes. Their presentation convinced the Conservation Commission members that everything was being done to minimize adverse impacts to the wetlands by:

- siting the access road on the highest point of land within the wetland,*
- making the road a straight line (shortest distance), and*
- ensuring that the natural flow of water through the wetland would not be obstructed by the new road.*

No mention was ever made of impacting the wetland vegetation that grows on the site, so it came as a complete surprise to see the vegetation being mowed. Large ruts and wheel tracks - some filled with water - were being created by the mowing equipment, leaving behind a landscape of mud, ponds and puddles where lush green vegetation once stood. This prompted telephone calls from concerned citizens to the Planning and Development Department, which in turn prompted the Department to call you looking for guidance.

At that time, we were informed that the land was a "wet meadow" and that mowing was permitted so long as the roots of the vegetation were not being disturbed. NHDES personnel viewed the site and in response wrote a letter to the owner of the property (August 3, 2018) advising the owner that a violation had been observed and asking that "future mowing or cutting of vegetation in this wetland (wet meadow) area does not leave any ruts from machinery by mowing or cutting when the ground is sufficiently dry or frozen".

Photos of the meadow taken since that time indicate that the mowing and rutting are continuing despite your August 3rd letter.

The purpose of this letter is twofold:

- (a) To establish for the record that the Conservation Commission would not have written their letter of support for this project had they known such activities would be occurring in this wetland; and*
- (b) To ask that further action be taken to prohibit further damage to the vegetation.*

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary Dickerman, Chair

Claremont Conservation Commission

Cc: N. Merrill

M. McCrory

C. Gomes

R. Rhoades

R. McNutt

Claremont Planning Board

After discussion, the Commission agreed to send the letter.

Motion: To send the letter to DES as written.

Made by: Ms. Skowronski **Second:** Ms. Gogan

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Note: There is to be an open house at the dealership on September 28th. Mr. Dickerman encouraged everyone from the Commission to attend.

IV. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Made by: Mr. Wood **Second:** Mr. Magnuson

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

de Forest Bearse